
BROWNING &
CALVERLEY
OR POEM AND
PARODY

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BROWNING & CALVERLEY
OR POEM & PARODY

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Browning & Calverley
or Poem and Parody



An Elucidation by
Percy L. Babington

JOHN  CASTLE
7 HENRIETTA STREET, STRAND, W.C. 2

To
John Albert Babington
My Loved & Honoured
Father

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PREFACE

LEST an influential body of writers (so rudely apostrophised by Tennyson "in a metre of Catullus") be tempted to regard the following pages as, merely, a freakish curiosity, lest a well-intentioned public drop this little volume uncomprehendingly, I will endeavour to make clear the reasons which impelled me to this task.

It is incontrovertible that *The Ring and the Book* powerfully assisted the establishment of its author's reputation, and amongst men of mark who took particular notice of the most amazing piece of analytical narrative in literature was Charles Stuart Calverley. Those who already knew him, through *Verses and Translations* (1862), may not have been altogether surprised to discover that the last, and longest, poem in *Fly Leaves* (1872) was a parody of the daring colloquialisms which occur so frequently, so intentionally and so unashamedly throughout Browning's work.

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Thus my first object in this compilation of parallel passages is to suggest that Calverley's own attitude to the poem which he parodied was one of delighted interest and keen admiration. Too many readers of *The Cock and the Bull* appear to imagine that the matter in it was obtained only from the "lawyer" Books (VIII and IX). The fact which does emerge, quite clearly, from a consideration of the parallel passages is that no reader in England, between 1869 and 1872, could have possessed a more intimate acquaintance than the parodist with the eleven-times-told tale. Such acquaintance was, surely, the result of an admiring interest in Browning's treatment of

" . . . the entire criminal cause
Of Guido Franceschini, nobleman."

As proof of this, consider line 114, which lays under contribution portions of three lines from three different Books. I venture to maintain that admiration of what is great in *The Ring and the Book* was not lacking in C. S. C., and that his super-subtle sense of the humorous stirred him

PREFACE

to the brilliant performance of his self-appointed task. A recent writer on the art of parody states that Calverley "wrote with genuine resentment of Browning's style." A *dictum* less worthy of credence, I cannot imagine. Only one who had read, and re-read, the twenty thousand lines could have so naturally interwoven words and phrases culled out of every Book, from the first to the twelfth. Assuredly the spur to such a performance was pleasure, not "resentment."

My second object is to tempt certain lovers of Browning, who tend to be over-serious, to relax for a while in the company of one of the great masters of light verse. It may be that there are many yet unacquainted with the lines on Beer and on Tobacco, with the parody of Tennyson's Brook, with the feline Monologue and the pedantic Schoolmaster. May they soon make their acquaintance!

My third object is to remind myself of the many happy hours which I have spent with *The Ring and the Book* during the last thirty years.

P. L. B.

9, Jesus Lane, Cambridge.

THE COCK AND THE BULL

YOU see this pebble-stone ? It's a thing
I bought
Of a bit of a chit of a boy i' the mid o' the
day—
I like to dock the smaller parts-o'-speech,
As we curtail the already cur-tail'd cur
(You catch the paronomasia, play 'po' 5
words ?)
Did, rather, i' the pre-Landseerian days.
Well, to my muttons. I purchased the
concern,
And clapt it i' my poke, having given for
same
By way o' chop, swop, barter or exchange—
'Chop' was my snickering dandiprat's 10
own term—
One shilling and fourpence, current coin o'
the realm
O-n-e one and f-o-u-r four
Pence, one and fourpence—you are with
me, sir ?—

THE RING AND THE BOOK

1	Do you see this Ring ?	I. 1
2	I' the course o' the day,	II. 135
4	so dove-tail	IX. 80
	Or, rather, ass-tail in,	
5	Calm in his levity,—indulge the quip!—	IX. 341
	Since 'tis a levite bears the bell away,	
7	Harass a mutton ere she made a mouth	IV. 129
8	“ how comes my purse	II. 1050
	I' the poke of you ? ”	
10	Who soon shall see volte-face and chop,	XII. 717
	Everyone snickered :	I. 429
	But for him,—mannikin and dandiprat,	XII. 437
11	Gave a <i>lira</i> for it, eightpence English just,	I. 39
12	<i>P-r-o—pro Guidone et Sociis.</i> There!	VIII. 128

THE COCK AND THE BULL

What hour it skills not : ten or eleven o'
the clock,
One day (and what a roaring day it was 15
Go shop or sight-see—bar a spit o' rain!)
In February, eighteen sixty nine,
Alexandrina Victoria, Fidei
Hm—hm—how runs the jargon ? being on
throne.
Such, sir, are all the facts, succinctly 20
put,
The basis or substratum—what you will—
Of the impending eighty thousand lines.
“ Not much in 'em either,” quoth perhaps
simple Hodge.
But there's a superstructure. Wait a bit.

Mark first the rationale of the thing : 25
Hear logic rivel and levigate the deed.
That shilling—and for matter o' that, the
pence—
I had o' course upo' me—wi' me say—
(*Mecum's* the Latin, make a note o' that)
When I popp'd pen i' stand, scratch'd ear,
wiped snout, 30
(Let everybody wipe his own himself)

THE RING AND THE BOOK

- | | | |
|----|---|---------------------|
| 15 | Fie, what a roaring day we've had! | II. 5 |
| 16 | Gone sight-see through the seven,
Yet leave i' the lurch at the first spit of
rain. | VII. 262
XI. 743 |
| 17 | And next day, February Twenty Two,
Since our salvation Sixteen Ninety Eight, | I. 348 |
| 18 | Francesca Camilla Vittoria Angela
Pompilia Comparini,—laughable! | VII. 6 |
| 19 | "she's an oracle, Hmm! | IV. 442 |
| 25 | The rationale of your scheme is just | XI. 1967 |
| 26 | Makes logic levigate the big crime small
And death came, death's breath rivelled up
the lies, | I. 1153
I. 1279 |
| 29 | " <i>Surge et scribe</i> ," make a note of it! | VIII. 1312 |
| 31 | "Let everybody wipe his own himself!" | XI. 1538 |

THE COCK AND THE BULL

Sniff'd—tch!—at snuffbox; tumbled up,
he-heed,
Haw-haw'd (not hee-haw'd, that's another
guess thing :)
Then fumbled at, and stumbled out of,
door,
I shoved the timber ope wi' my omoplat ; 35
And *in vestibulo*, i' the lobby to-wit,
(Iacobi Facciolati's rendering, sir,)
Donn'd galligaskins, antigropeloes,
And so forth ; and, complete with hat and
gloves,
One on and one a-dangle i' my hand, 40
And ombrifuge (Lord love you!), case o'
rain,
I flopp'd forth, 'sbuddikins! on my own
ten toes,
(I do assure you there be ten of them),
And went clump-clumping up hill and
down dale
To find myself o' the sudden i' front o' the 45
boy.
Put case I hadn't 'em on me, could I ha'
bought
This sort-o'-kind-o'-what-you-might-call
toy,

THE RING AND THE BOOK

- 32 Snuff here, sniff there,— VI. 1569
 And as they left by one door, in at the other IV. 1392
 Tumbled the neighbours—
 “And touch up an odd phrase in time of VI. 363
 need (He, he!) ”
- 33 Another guess tribunal than ours here IV. 1498
- 34 Down stairs again goes fumbling by the IV. 192
 rope
- 35 There is an ailing in this omoplat V. 118
- 36 Beside fact’s self, these summaries to- X. 217
 wit,—
- 38 And so find door, put galligaskin off VIII. 43
- 41 Turns sunscreen, paravent and ombrifuge X. 466
 Well, British Public, ye who like me not, I. 410
 (God love you!)
- 42 both flopped down, prayed blessing on VI. 378
 bent pate
 Why, ’sbuddikins, old Innocent himself VIII. 98
 on ten toes stand once more. III. 621
- 44 Thither they clump-clumped, VI. 376
- 46 Put case a person wrongs me VIII. 1485
- 47 This sort-of-what-one-might-name sheep XI. 1183

THE COCK AND THE BULL

This pebble-thing, o' the boy-thing ?

Q. E. D.

That's proven without aid from mumping
Pope,

Sleek porporate or bloated Cardinal. 50
(Isn't it, old Fatchaps ? You're in Euclid
now.)

So, having the shilling—having i' fact a
lot—

And pence and halfpence, ever so many o'
them,

I purchased, as I think I said before,
The pebble (*lapis, lapidis, -di, -dem, -de—* 55
What nouns 'crease short i' the genitive,
Fatchaps, eh ?)

O' the boy, a bare-legg'd beggarly son of
a gun,

For one-and-fourpence. Here we are again.

Now Law steps in, bigwigg'd, volumin-
ous-jaw'd ;

Investigates and re-investigates. 60

Was the transaction illegal ? Law shakes
head.

Perpend, sir, all the bearings of the case.

THE RING AND THE BOOK

- 48 Ere the stuff grow a ring-thing right to I. 17
 wear
 This poor gilded fly Pompilia-thing, II. 1356
- 49 And nuns a-maundering here and mumping XI. 699
 there
- 50 Paul shall be porporate V. 227
 That bloated bubble I. 557
- 51 My boy, your godson, fat-chaps Hyacinth, XII. 331
 Virgil, now, should not be too difficult VIII. 473
- 55 *Amo -as -avi -atum -are -ans* VIII. 5
- 56 "What prepositions take the accusative?" VIII. 969
- 59 For Law steps in : IX. 1133
- 60 Till law said "Reinvestigate the case!" III. 687
- 61 "This is indeed a business!" law shook II. 1091
 head :
- 62 All may be gloriously retrieved. Perpend! XII. 671

THE COCK AND THE BULL

At first the coin was mine, the chattel his.
But now (by virtue of the said exchange
And barter) *vice versa* all the coin, 65
Per juris operationem, vests
I' the boy and his assigns till ding o' doom ;
(*In sæcula sæculo-o-o-orum*;
I think I hear the Abate mouth out that.)
To have and hold the same to him and 70
them . . .

Confer some idiot on Conveyancing.
Whereas the pebble and every part thereof,
And all that appertaineth thereunto,
Quodcunque pertinet ad eam rem,
(I fancy, sir, my Latin's rather pat) 75
Or shall, will, may, might, can, could,
would or should,
(*Subaudi cætera*—clap we to the close—
For what's the good of law in a case o' the
kind)

Is mine to all intents and purposes.
This settled, I resume the thread o' the tale. 80

Now for a touch o' the vendor's quality.
He says a gen'lman bought a pebble of him,
(This pebble i' sooth, sir, which I hold i'
my hand)—

THE RING AND THE BOOK

- 63 Be chattel and not chapman any more ? XI. 1174
- 64 Purchase and sale being thus so plain a point, v. 574
- 65 I' the barter with the body and money-bag v. 576
- 68 —*in secula* VI. 448
- Secu-lo-o-o-o-rum.*
- 69 The Abate, brother Paolo, helped most III. 1330
- 70 To have and hold and get much good from out! XI. 2257
- 71 (Confer a passage in the Canticles.) IX. 289
- 74 *Non voluntarie sed coacte scriptam !* VIII. 198
- That's the way to write Latin, friend my Fisc!
- 76 Praise, blame, sit, stand, lie or go! XI. 619
- 77 From such exordium clap we to the close ; I. 1165
- 78 Sir, what's the good of law II. 1519
- In a case o' the kind ?
- 80 My Fisc! I waste no kick on you, but pass. VIII. 1249
- 81 Now for a touch o' the daughter's quality. II. 762

THE COCK AND THE BULL

And paid for't, *like* a gen'lman, on the nail.
"Did I o'ercharge him a ha'penny? Devil 85
a bit.

Fiddlepin's end! Get out, you blazing ass!
Gabble o' the goose. Don't bugaboo-baby
me!

Go double or quits? Yah! tittup! what's
the odds?"

—There's the transaction view'd i' the
vendor's light.

Next ask that dumped hag, stood 90
snuffing by,

With her three frowsy blowsy brats o' babes,
The scum o' the kennel, cream o' the filth-
heap—

Faugh!

Aie, aie, aie, aie! ότοτοτοτοτοϊ,
(?Stead which we blurt out Hoighty toighty
now)—

And the baker and candlestickmaker, and 95
Jack and Gill,

Blar'd Goody this and queasy Gaffer that.
Ask the schoolmaster. Take schoolmaster
first.

THE RING AND THE BOOK

- 86 A fiddle-pin's end! II. 230
 Bottini, burn thy books, thou blazing ass! VIII. 1813
- 87 —gabble o' the goose! V. 447
 And other bugaboo-and-baby-work,— V. 951
- 88 Double or quits, I play, XI. 722
 Without a tittup the procession through. V. 322
- 90 And Latin duple Cinarello's chin, VIII. 65
 But it was she the hag, V. 1649
 Save that he snuffled somewhat X. 271
- 91 frowzy pate XI. 1151
 A drab's brat IV. 611
- 92 Daughter? Dirt V. 772
 O' the kennel!
 The babe had been a find i' the filth-heap, II. 558
 Prostrate among the filthy feeders—faugh! X. 503
- 93 aie, aie, aie, V. 9
- 95 Why not have taken the butcher's son, the IV. 592
 boy
 O' the baker or candlestick-maker?
 Why sells Jack his ware? Why does Jill IV. 533
 buy it?
- 96 Put away gossip Jack and goody Joan V. 520
 As if the queasy river could not hold X. 113
 But Eminence This and All-Illustrious That I. 937

THE COCK AND THE BULL

He saw a gentleman purchase of a lad
A stone, and pay for it *rite*, on the square,
And carry it off *per saltum*, jauntily, 100
Propria quæ maribus, gentleman's property

now

(Agreeably to the law explain'd above),
In proprium usum, for his private ends.
The boy he chuck'd a brown i' the air, and
bit

I' the face the shilling : heaved a thumping
stone 105

At a lean hen that run cluck clucking by,
(And hit her, dead as nail i' post o' door,)
Then *abiit*—what's the Ciceronian
phrase?—

Excessit, evasit, erupit—off slogs boy
Off like bird, *avi similis*—(you observed 110
The dative? Pretty i' the Mantuan!)—

Anglice

Off in three flea-skips. *Hactenus*, so far,
So good, *tam bene*. *Bene, satis, male*—,
Where was I with my trope 'bout one in a
quag?

I did once hitch the syntax into verse : 115
Verbum personale, a verb personal,

THE RING AND THE BOOK

- 100 *Nimis dolose*, overwilily VIII. 831
 By some off-hand and jaunty fling, VIII. 1113
 104 this square old yellow Book, I toss I. 33
 I' the air,
 105 For this young beauty with the thumping IV. 349
 purse ?
 107 Saves a man dead as nail in post of door. XII. 296
 108 Ovidian quip or Ciceronian crank I. 1157
 109 *Tædas jugales iniit, subiit*,—ha! VIII. 131
 110 You notice the subjunctive ? XII. 339
 111 Pretty i' the Pagan! IX. 430
 —tenderly the Mantuan turns IX. 284
 the expression,
 112 He was at Via Vittoria in three skips : IV. 476
 114 (Where was I with that angler-simile ?) II. 322
 verily I. 1305
 And in no trope at all
 —what did I say of one in a quag ? III. 618
 115 I had hoped to have hitched . . . into VIII. 965
 verse
 a complete list
 O' the prepositions

THE COCK AND THE BULL

Concordat—ay, “ agrees,” old Fatchaps—
cum

Nominativo, with its nominative,
Genere, i’ point o’ gender, *numero*,
O’ number, *et persona*, and person. *Ut*, 120
Instance : *Sol ruit*, down flops sun, *et* and,
Montes umbrantur, out flounce mountains.
Pah!

Excuse me, sir, I think I’m going mad.
You see the trick on’t though, and can
yourself

Continue the discourse *ad libitum*. 125
It takes up about eighty thousand lines,
A thing imagination boggles at :
And might, odds-bobs, sir! in judicious
hands,
Extend from here to Mesopotamy.

THE RING AND THE BOOK

- 121 Out trundles body, down flops head on
 floor, XI. 234
- 122 And neck-deep in a minute there flounced
 they III. 520
- 123 I was just stark mad, let the madman live XI. 2422
- 127 A thing their superstition boggles at, VI. 282
- 129 " In Mesopotamy twelve centuries since," XI. 570

NOTES.

The Cock and the Bull first appeared in 1872 and consisted of 122 lines. The revised version exhibited certain verbal alterations and contained seven new lines. These changes are noted below. The numerals refer to the lines of the revised version as printed in the preceding pages.

- 5 1st ed. play o' words
- 8 „ and gave
- 9 „ By way, to-wit, of . . .
- 16 Not in the first edition.
- 30 1st ed. popped
- 30 „ blew snout, scratched ear
- 31 Not in the first edition.
- 35 1st ed. the door
- 37 Not in the first edition.
- 39 1st ed. flopped
- 74 Not in the first edition.
- 75 Not in the first edition.
- 86 1st ed. Fiddlestick's
- 96 „ Bleared
- 102 „ explained
- 110 Not in the first edition.
- 111 Not in the first edition.
- 114 1st ed. Where was I? who said what of . . .
- 122 „ snuffs out mountains.

The Ring and the Book first appeared in four volumes, two being published in 1868 and two more in 1869. It contains rather more than twenty one thousand one hundred lines; hence Calverley's "eighty thousand lines."

- 37 *Facciolati* (1682-1769) was the author of the famous *Totius Latinitatis Lexicon* published in four volumes, folio, in 1771.
- 38 *antigropeloes*: this unusual word does not occur in *The Ring and the Book*. Originally the proprietary name for a certain make of waterproof leggings, it is to be found in Kingsley's *Yeast* and George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*.
- 111 *the Mantuan*, i.e. Virgil.

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